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JUL 10 1962

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Status of Salinity Problem on Lower Colorado River
and Chamizal Dispute

1. Salinity Problem on Lower Colorado River

The United States Commissioner on the International Boundary and Water Commission and the Chairman of the United States panel of scientists studying the salinity problem went to Mexico City about June 16 in what proved to be a final attempt to reach agreement with the Mexican scientists on a joint report. This attempt followed a personal letter from the Secretary of State to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, in which the Secretary urged that the Mexican scientists be permitted to sign a joint report on which tentative agreement was reached on May 8. The effort was unsuccessful because the Mexican Government wanted to include a strong reservation as to the adequacy of the proposals of the United States panel and insisted, if any discussion of the Mexicali Valley were included, that the report state that the facts demonstrated that the situation in the Mexicali Valley was not responsible for the salinity problem. The United States panel saw little merit in a joint report which highlighted the disagreement between the scientists of the two countries. Although the panel considers that the crux of the problem is a reduction in the amount of salt discharged to the river by the Wellton-Mohawk irrigation district in Arizona, it did not feel it could agree to a paragraph which stated that the situation in the Mexicali Valley had nothing to do with the problem.

The United States panel has now prepared a separate report of which a draft has been furnished to the Departments of State and Interior. As soon as it has been approved by the panel members it will be submitted formally to the United States Commissioner. The panel is expected to propose three possible solutions, the most promising of which involves the by-passing of saline waters without charge to Mexico. The United States Commissioner has prepared his comments and recommendations and will forward them with the report as soon as it is submitted to him. The Bureau of Reclamation has

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re-programmed \$50,000 of fiscal year 1962 funds, and will re-program an additional \$335,000 of fiscal year 1963 funds to complete engineering studies of the proposals which the panel is expected to make. The Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, in agreeing to this re-programming, stipulated that none of the funds could be used to study any proposal involving the by-passing of saline water to the Gulf of California nor any proposal that did not charge to Mexico all drainage water from the Wellton-Mohawk irrigation district. So long as this restriction applies, it will not be possible to investigate the proposal which the United States panel considers offers the best possibilities for a satisfactory solution.

2. Chamizal

The United States Commissioner on the International Boundary and Water Commission has let a contract for an aerial photograph of the Chamizal area. This is the first step in engineering studies to determine the feasibility of relocating the river in the El Paso area to "cut" to Mexico as much as practical of the Chamizal tract. He also plans to obtain estimates on (1) the value of land and improvements in the Chamizal, (2) the cost of relocation of public utility and power lines, the railroad, and Franklin irrigation canal and (3) construction costs for the new river channel and levees. In view of the public controversy which has been stirred in El Paso because of the discussion of the Chamizal issue, the Commissioner plans to wait until public debate quiets before he proceeds with the appraisals which of necessity would have to be done on a fairly public basis.

Ambassador Mann discussed Chamizal with the Mexican Foreign Minister on July 6. He urged that Mexico agree to accept our version of the 1864 river line (which would mean that the Chamizal tract contains 420 acres) if the United States is to agree to accept the Chamizal award. The Ambassador considers it would be physically possible, without injury to El Paso, to relocate the Rio Grande so that 420 acres would be cut to Mexico from the Chamizal tract or immediately adjacent thereto. The Foreign Minister showed no disposition to compromise on his position that the United States should accept the award, agree to Mexico's version of the 1864 river under which Chamizal consists of 457 acres, and give the acreage to Mexico in one cut in El Paso.

Ambassador Mann plans to brief the Governor of Texas, as well as the two candidates for Governor. It was not possible to work this out during the weekend July 7-8, but the Ambassador is prepared to do so any time after July 20 if agreeable to Vice President Johnson and Governor Daniels. Congressman Rutherford, in whose district El Paso is located, is being kept fully informed of all developments.

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The United States Commissioner is preparing several alternative locations for the Rio Grande at El Paso which he believes would be acceptable to El Paso. He will discuss these with Ambassador Mann, and the Ambassador will then seek an appointment with the Mexican President in an effort to reach an understanding that will provide a basis for the negotiation of a treaty on this matter. Unless such an understanding can be reached, it would not appear politically possible to consider recognizing the arbitration award rendered in 1911.

W. W. Slater
William H. Brubeck *for*
Executive Secretary

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